(e) if so, the steps being taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) Production of tea during the past three years has been as follows:

Year	Production (in Mn. Kms.)
1992 . . .	704
1993 . . .	758
1994 . . .	744 (Prov.)

(c) As a result of higher production of tea coupled with lower intake of Indian tea by Russia, Iran and CIS countries, prices of teas at major auction centres have shown a decline.

(d) No, Sir. There were unconfirmed reports of North Indian Tea industry deciding to halt production in North East India from December, 1994 till next season. This has however since been repudiated by the industry.

(e) Does not arise.

Export of aluminium metal

849. SHRI T. VENKATRAM REDDY:
SHRI G. PRATHAPA REDDY:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state whether the export of indigenous aluminium metal has increased during the current year in comparison to last year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): The value of exports of Aluminium metal and semis during April-November, 1994 was Rs. 175.00 crores (Provisional). The exports during 1993-94 and 1992-93 were Rs. 255.00 crores and 383.00 crores respectively.

Imposition of Import Duties on Indian Tobacco by US Administration

850. SHRI T. VENKATRAM REDDY:
SHRI G. PRATHAPA REDDY:
Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that US Authorities have imposed import duties on Indian tobacoo:

(b) if so, the details of the trade relations with US on the issue of Indian Tobacoo; and

(c) steps being taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (c) While US has not yet effected any changes in the tariff structure on Tobacoo, a minimum domestic content requirement of 75 per cent. was prescribed in US legislation governing cigarette production in USA, in 1993. Upon the matter being raised by interested parties (India had a third party interest), a GATT panel has ruled this measures not to be in conformity with US obligations under GATT.

Trade agreement with South Africa

851. SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE:
SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether during the recent visit of South African President to New Delhi, a trade agreement between the two countries was signed:

(b) if so, the terms of agreement: and

(c) the likely impact thereof on the export/import trade during ensuing years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) No, Sir. However, a formal trade agreement was signed on 22nd August, 1994 at Johannesburg between India and South Africa, the salient features of which are as follows:—

(i) Grant of Most Favoured Nation status in all matters of import and export licences, customs duties and all other charges & taxes applicable to importation, exportation and transit of goods.

(ii) Grant of all advantages, favours, privileges or immunities which any contracting party has granted to any other third party.

(c) it is expected that the Agreement would have a positive impact on trade between the two countries in the ensuing years.

Import of Natural Rubber

852. SHRI SUNDER SINGH BHANDARI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) how much natural rubber is bein imported for the last three years and at what price;

(b) what is the demand and local supply of natural rubber during the period;

(c) what has been the import duty on natural rubber; and

(d) whether any facility is given under the export incentive scheme for natural rubber, if so, what has been the import on this account?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM (a) Natural rubbei imported during the last three years and its price are as under:—

Year	Import of rubber (against advance licencing tonnes)	Unit price of imported imported rubber (Rs./tonnes)
1991-92	14,500	19,603
1992-93	16,498	26,068
1993-94	21,384††	23,312
1994-95*	6,394	30,274

††Includes 4131 tonnes with licences issued by the Government.

* upto November 1994.

(b) Demand and supply of NR during the ptriod are as under:

Year	Production (tonnes)	Consumption (tonnes
1991-92	366,745	380,150
1992-93	393,490	414,105
1993-94	435,160	450,480
1994-95	472,000	483,000